
Communiqué News Release

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MINISTER STRAHL ANNOUNCES INITIATIVE AND APPOINTMENT TO IMPROVE THE NORTHERN REGULATORY SYSTEM

Yellowknife, NWT (November 7, 2007) – The Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, today committed to helping the North to realize its true potential by announcing a new initiative that will improve the overall northern regulatory environment, as well as the appointment of Neil McCrank as the Minister's Special Representative responsible to advance this initiative.

"It is essential that we maximize the potential benefits of resource-development projects, while protecting the environment, and to do that we must have predictable, effective and efficient regulatory systems across the North," said Minister Strahl. "To achieve this, I am proud to announce the *Northern Regulatory Improvement Initiative*."

The Government of Canada's *Northern Strategy*, outlined in the recent *Speech from the Throne*, includes a commitment to promote economic development and protect environmental heritage in the North, for which effective regulatory regimes are essential.

The *Northern Regulatory Improvement Initiative* is a strategy to improve the current regulatory regime, which is a shared system with shared decision-making responsibilities among many stakeholders – federal, territorial, and Aboriginal.

Minister Strahl added: "By appointing Neil McCrank to move this initiative forward, we are helping to ensure that regulatory regimes across the North are effective and predictable, and will better equip the North to develop and benefit from its resources in the best way possible."

Mr. McCrank will work to improve existing regulatory regimes across the North, which includes holding discussions with stakeholders in all three territories. Mr. McCrank will submit a final report to the Government of Canada outlining proposed recommendations for advancing the regulatory regime, after which Canada will develop a strategy for action.

Today's announcement also included an investment of \$6.6 million over five years to address immediate operational needs in the Northwest Territories to ensure timely review of project proposals.

The *Northern Regulatory Improvement Initiative* will build on other successful activities already underway across the North, including:

- Amendments to the *Canada Oil and Gas Operations Act* to provide the National Energy Board with the authority to regulate pipeline access;
- Amendments to the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act*, to ensure the basic principle of "one project, one environmental assessment";
- The Five Year Review of the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*; and
- Accelerated development of the *Nunavut Land Use Planning and Impact Assessment Act*.

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Link to Neil McCrank's biography:

For more information, media may contact:

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Ce texte est également disponible en français.



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Biographical Note - M. Neil McCrank, Q.C., P.Eng.

Mr. Neil McCrank is an experienced negotiator and lawyer who has extensive experience working in the public sector. As a senior Alberta Government official (Assistant Deputy Minister, Deputy Minister and Chairman) for over 20 years, he was involved in policy development and decision making at the provincial government level.

Mr. McCrank was Chairman of the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board from 1998 – 2007. During that time he was often involved in very complex, high profile and politically sensitive regulatory issues. In the role of Chairman, he was responsible for negotiating settlements and regulatory issues. During his tenure, he established a committee of First Nations and Métis chiefs and established a Community and Aboriginal Relations office to address energy development near Treaty lands.

For nine years before moving to the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board, Mr. McCrank was Deputy Minister of Justice and Deputy Attorney General for the Alberta Department of Justice. In these roles, he was involved with negotiations on developing strategies to address Aboriginal Justice issues. Mr. McCrank assisted in setting up the first Aboriginal police force, Aboriginal Court and correctional facilities in Alberta.

Mr. McCrank graduated with a law degree from Queen's University in 1969 and was called to the bar shortly after. He has a Bachelors degree in Electrical Engineering also from Queen's. He is a member of several boards including the Canadian Energy Research Institute, the Centre for Applied Business Research into Energy and the Environment, and the Institute for Sustainable Energy, Environment and Economy.